

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: EEC, EP, PERP, MMOL
SUBJ: THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LOOKS INTO THE COMMUNITY'S
DEFENSE PRODUCTION/PROCUREMENT POLICY

REF: BRUSSELS 4160

1. SUMMARY: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (EP) POLITICAL COMMITTEE'S APRIL 21 ADOPTION OF A REPORT ON EUROPEAN ARMS PROCUREMENT COOPERATION (REFTEL) HAS SPARKED ANOTHER SERIES OF COMMENTARIES BY EMILIO GAZZO, EDITOR OF THE BRUSSELS DAILY AGENCE EUROPE, SUPPORTING THE NEED FOR SUCH A COMMON PRODUCTION AND PROCUREMENT POLICY AND ARGUING IN FAVOR OF AN EC COMMON DEFENSE SYSTEM. THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORT, KNOWN AS THE KLEPSCH REPORT, IS SCHEDULED FOR DISCUSSION AT THE EP'S JUNE PLENARY SESSION; A LIVELY DEBATE IS ANTICIPATED. END SUMMARY.

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2. BY A VOTE OF 18 TO 5 (BRITISH AND DANISH SOCIALISTS WERE AGAINST) THE EP'S POLITICAL COMMITTEE ADOPTED THE KLEPSCH REPORT WHICH PROPOSES THAT THE EC COMMISSION PRESENT TO THE EC COUNCIL A EUROPEAN ACTION PROGRAM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION OF CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS. THE ADOPTION OF THE REPORT HAS PROMPTED THE EDITOR OF AGENCE EUROPE TO COMMENT AGAIN ON WHAT HE CONSIDERS THE IMPORT-

ANCE OF A EUROPEAN ARMS PROCUREMENT PROGRAM AND A COMMON DEFENSE POLICY. IN THREE EDITORIALS (MAY 17-20), GAZZO, A STAUNCH EUROPEAN INTEGRATIONIST, REITERATES HIS VIEW THAT COMMON ARMS PROCUREMENT POLICY IS A NECESSARY AND IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THE EC'S COMMON INDUSTRIAL POLICY, AND THAT, BY EXTENSION, THE EC SHOULD DEVELOP A COMMON DEFENSE POLICY. IN SUPPORT OF HIS THESIS, GAZZO ARGUES THAT "THE ORGANIZATION OF A EUROPEAN ARMS INDUSTRY DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN AN ARMS RACE, BUT AN IMPROVEMENT IN PRODUCTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE AIM OF AN EFFICIENT INTER-OPERABILITY AND PRODUCTIVITY AND A BETTER BALANCE BETWEEN US AND EUROPEAN DIMENSIONS." MOREOVER, HE ARGUES, A COMMUNITY SECURITY POLICY IS ESSENTIAL IF THE EC IS TO MAINTAIN ITS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC VIABILITY. GAZZO COMMENDS THE EP FOR UNDERTAKING AN EXAMINATION OF THE NEED FOR A COMMON ARMS PROCUREMENT POLICY AND, WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT EP INTERVENTION IN THIS SPHERE MAY CREATE A "CONFLICT OF COMPETENCES" (E.G., WITH ORGANIZATIONS LIKE NATO AND WEU), CONCLUDES THAT ONCE THE EP IS DIRECTLY ELECTED, PARLIAMENT SHOULD NOT EVADE ITS RESPONSIBILITY IN THE SECURITY FIELD.

3. COMMENT: SOME EC OBSERVERS THINK THE KLEPSCH REPORT WILL BE VIEWED POSITIVELY BY EC COMMISSIONER DAVIGNON WHO, WE UNDERSTAND, SUPPORTS AN INTEGRATION OF CIVILIAN AND MILITARY PRODUCTION AS THE BEST MEANS FOR ACHIEVING A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOUND COMMON EC INDUSTRIAL POLICY. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS UNLIKELY THAT THE EP'S JUNE DEBATE ON THE QUESTION WILL STRIKE A RESPONSIVE CHORD FROM THE EC COUNCIL. INTER ALIA, THE DEBATE MAY RESULT IN SOME BLURRING OF THE DESIRE FOR A COMMON INDUSTRIAL POLICY IN THE MILITARY EQUIPMENT SPHERE AND AN ADVOCACY IN CERTAIN PARLIAMENTARY QUARTERS FOR AN EC DEFENSE PROGRAM. THE COUNCIL HAS HABITUALLY TAKEN THE POSITION THAT DEFENSE POLICY AS SUCH IS NOT WITHIN EC COMPETENCE. HINTON

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